

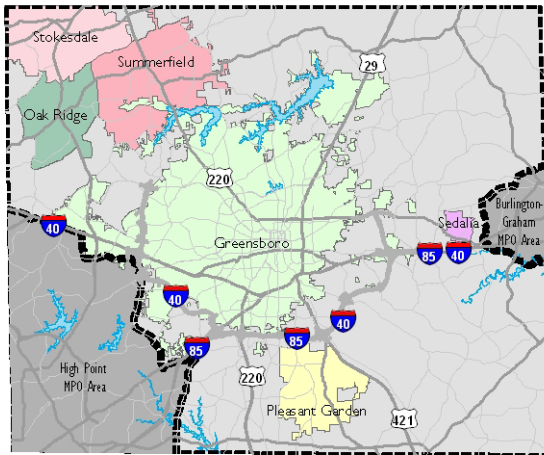
Chapter I

Introduction and Vision

Long Range Transportation Plan: What is it? And why?

The 2035 Long Range Transportation Plan addresses surface transportation, including highways, railways, public transit, bicycling, and pedestrians, as well as intermodal connections and connections to aviation. It covers the Greensboro Metropolitan Area including the City of Greensboro; the Towns of Pleasant Garden, Oak Ridge, Sedalia, Stokesdale, and Summerfield; and much of unincorporated Guilford County (shown in Map 1.1) – an area estimated to include 612 square miles and a population of 371,000 (2009 estimate).

Map 1.1



The plan provides an assessment of future area transportation needs, issues and recommendations, along with future transportation investment recommendations. The plan was adopted by the Greensboro Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) on January 28, 2009. The plan was originally scheduled for approval in August 2008. However, additional air quality analysis was required and delayed the approval of the document. Once complete, it will be a resource for area local governments and the NCDOT and will fulfill federal requirements for the Long Range Transportation Plan.

The 2035 Plan has been developed to reflect and complement various community and regional plans and major studies including the Greensboro Connections 2025 Comprehensive Plan; Guilford County and Area Town land use plans; the Greensboro Urban Area Bicycle, Pedestrian and Greenways Master Plan; the MPO Congestion Management Process; GTA's long range public transportation plan (Mobility Greensboro) and short range plans; PART studies for regional transit and land use; Triad demand model development; work of the Piedmont Land Conservancy (Piedmont Greenway); and NCDOT projects and studies.

This transportation plan includes:

- Review of existing and projected future conditions including infrastructure and travel demand
- Assessment of reasonably foreseeable future transportation investment levels.
- Assessment of environmental constraints
- Transportation policy findings and recommendations
- Recommended future transportation investments by future network year
- Discussion of expected revenue shortfalls and needs that may go unmet
- Demonstration of conformity to air quality requirements
- Maps and summaries of public involvement and technical analysis
- A new "Comprehensive Transportation Plan" map series to meet NCDOT requirements and an updated thoroughfare plan

The Vision

The 2035 Plan succeeds the 2030 Plan, a major overhaul of earlier plans that involved extensive analysis, public outreach (including 14 public meetings throughout the MPO area), and documentation. The 2035 Plan updates this framework using new tools and data, additional analysis, and additional public involvement activities. The 2035 Plan retains the vision from the 2030 Plan, listed below:

To develop and maintain a safe, efficient, and environmentally

Greensboro Urban Area 2035 Long Range Transportation Plan

compatible transportation system that provides convenient choices for accessing destinations throughout the Greensboro Metropolitan Area and the Triad, including well-integrated, connected public transportation, pedestrian, and bicycle networks.

This vision reflects the need for a balanced transportation system that provides a range of convenient transportation choices, with strong support for: strategic investment in the highway system, expanded pedestrian and bicycle facility networks, and enhanced and expanded public transportation services.

Key Goals

The 2035 Transportation Plan retains the following key goals first identified under the 2030 Plan. Supporting the realization of the comprehensive goals is a chief function of the Plan. The goals are to:

- ☞ Support the economic vitality of the metropolitan area, the Triad, and the state.
- ☞ Improve accessibility and mobility for people and freight.
- ☞ Increase the safety and security of the transportation system for all users.
- ☞ Enhance the quality of life of the metropolitan area.
- ☞ Protect and enhance the natural and human environment.
- ☞ Enhance the integration and connectivity of the transportation system, across and between modes, for people and freight.
- ☞ Expand opportunities for travel choices including public transportation, walking, and bicycling.
- ☞ Promote efficient transportation system management and operations.
- ☞ Emphasize the preservation and maintenance of the existing transportation system.

Federal Requirements

The Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) incorporates a wide range of federally mandated analyses and process steps. The most recent federal transportation legislation, known as SAFETEA-LU (Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: a Legacy for Users), requires the plan to address eight planning factors, analyze future conditions on the transportation system, look at air quality, and include a fiscally constrained financial plan. The eight planning factors listed below overlap with the key goals of the plan. Promoting the planning factors is a primary goal

for the LRTP.

- ☞ Support the economic vitality of the metropolitan area, especially by enabling global competitiveness, productivity, and efficiency;
- ☞ Increase the safety of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users;
- ☞ Increase the security of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users;
- ☞ Increase accessibility and mobility of people and freight;
- ☞ Protect and enhance the environment, promote energy conservation, improve the quality of life, and promote consistency between transportation improvements and State and local planned growth and economic development patterns;
- ☞ Enhance the integration and connectivity of the transportation system, across and between modes, for people and freight;
- ☞ Promote efficient system management and operation; and
- ☞ Emphasize the preservation of the existing transportation system.

Challenges for the 2035 Plan

The 2035 Transportation Plan was developed in the context of current challenges facing the area, the metropolitan planning process, the state, and the nation. These challenges include

- ☞ Pressures from continued growth of population, employment, and infrastructure and concurrent demands on infrastructure capacity and maintenance.
- ☞ Community needs and expectations for economic development, and quality of life all of which are integrally tied to transportation improvements and maintenance
- ☞ The challenge of meeting key investment needs given a recent past of escalating costs for maintenance and construction -- limited investment dollars do not go as far as they once did -- in the context of more general fiscal strain at all levels of government.
- ☞ A political environment in which transportation funding challenges at all levels of government have yet to be substantially resolved through national, state, and local action.